

For detailed maps of complete trail sections and specific information concerning the Ozark Trail, you may contact:

**Missouri Department of Natural Resources**

Ozark Trail Coordinator  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
(314)751-3443

**Missouri Department of Conservation**

State Forester  
P.O. Box 180  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
(314)751-4115

**Mark Twain National Forest**

401 Fairgrounds Road  
Rolla, MO 65401  
(314)364-4621

**Ozark National Scenic Riverways**

P.O. Box 448  
Van Buren, MO 63965  
(314)323-4236



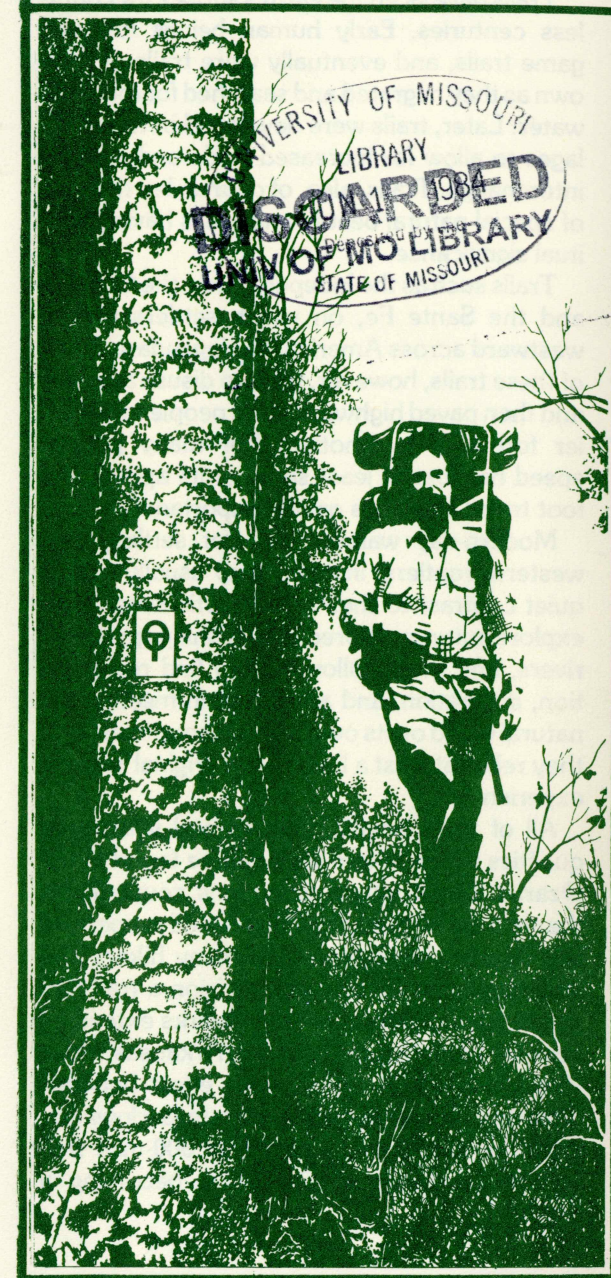
For information on the Ozark Highlands Trail, contact:

**Arkansas Trails Council**

One Capital Mall  
Little Rock, AR 72201

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# THE ZARK TRAIL





# The Ozark Trail

Trails have laced the earth's surface for countless centuries. Early human beings followed game trails, and eventually wore trails of their own as they migrated and searched for food and water. Later, trails were developed between villages to allow for increased trade and cultural interchange. Trails, also, of course, led to areas of special natural beauty and areas having spiritual significance.

Trails such as the Independence, the Oregon, and the Sante Fe, on which settlers moved westward across America, are legendary. Most of these trails, however, fell into disuse as roads and then paved highways lured people to speedier forms of locomotion. For many people, speed has lost at least some of its appeal and foot travel again has gained importance.

Modern-day walkers are not settling new western frontiers; instead, they usually seek a quiet contrast to their often-hectic lives. They explore autumn-colored hills, rushing spring-fed rivers, and quiet hollows. They find revitalization, inspiration, and adventure in meeting the natural world on its own terms; sometimes, too, they relive at least a little of the original pioneer experience.

All of these scenic features and wilderness qualities which hikers seek can be found in the Ozarks. These natural attractions, coupled with the sizeable amount of public-owned property in the Ozarks, have prompted many hikers and land-managing agencies to envision a trail that would someday traverse the Ozarks extending from St. Louis through western Arkansas. Now, through a unique cooperative effort between state and federal agencies, private landowners, and trail users, this vision of a 500-mile trail across the Missouri Ozarks is becoming a reality.

## How was the Ozark Trail established and who is responsible for its administration?

In 1977 a group of public land managers, trail users, and private landowners met to discuss the concept of a long-distance trail that would traverse the Missouri Ozarks. The concept was met with great enthusiasm and resulted in a commitment of those involved to work toward the development of such a trail and in the establishment of the Ozark Trail Council. As plans for the Ozark Trail in Missouri were being formulated, a similar movement was taking place in Arkansas. The result was a commitment to develop a trail through the Ozark Mountains of northwest Arkansas to be known as the Ozark Highlands Trail. The goal of both states is now to connect the Ozark Trail and the Ozark Highlands Trail, which will provide the opportunity to hike approximately 700 miles through some of the most scenic country in the United States.

## Where will the Ozark Trail be located and when will it be complete?

The Ozark Trail will follow the most scenic and varied route possible from the St. Louis metropolitan area southwestward through the Ozarks of southern Missouri to the Arkansas border where it will join the Ozark Highlands Trail. It will also include an eastern loop that will traverse the scenic St. Francois Mountain region. Much of the trail development to this point has taken place on public land. Future development will be dependent upon the ability to negotiate trail easements with private landowners, but it is hoped that the entire Ozark Trail will be complete in 10-15 years. The map in this brochure shows the entire proposed route from St. Louis to Arkansas and those portions of the trail that are complete.

## What is the purpose of the Ozark Trail Council and who are its members?

The purpose of the Ozark Trail Council is to promote the Ozark Trail; to establish guidelines for its construction, maintenance, marking, and mapping; to publicize the trail; and generally to provide an organizational framework within which all matters relating to the Ozark Trail in Missouri can be discussed and resolved.

Landowners, land managers, and trail users are all represented on the Council. Key members include: Mark Twain National Forest, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Pioneer Forest, the Sierra Club, the Ozark Society, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and the Conservation Federation of Missouri.

## Will the Ozark Trail cross private land?

Much of the Ozark Trail will be on state or federal land, but some sections will cross private property. All crossings will occur only where voluntary consent of the landowner has been obtained. Landowners will retain all rights of ownership to their property and will be granting use for hiking and backpacking purposes only and not for general public access to their land for such activities as hunting, fishing, and camping. Such use may be terminated at any time by the landowner. Thus, it is especially important that trail users respect the private landowner's land and right to privacy. Close all gates; stay on the path; stay away from cattle, timber operations, mining operations, homes, etc. All risk and responsibility when crossing private land will be that of the hiker, not that of the landowner.

## Who builds and maintains the Ozark Trail?

The land manager across whose land the trail passes is responsible for building and maintaining the trail. In the case of private property, that agency or organization having the trail easement is responsible for the construction and maintenance. Those responsible for these services often seek the assistance of volunteers to help construct the trail and then assume some of the maintenance duties.

## Who may use the trail?

The Ozark Trail is for families, groups, and individuals . . . for the old and the young. It can be walked for an hour with no specialized equipment, or for days with sophisticated backpacking gear.

The Ozark Trail is being built primarily to provide a high-quality experience for hikers and backpackers. However, several sections will be open to equestrians. No motorized vehicles will be allowed.


## When is it best to use the trail? Do I need special skills or equipment?

All seasons offer their charms — and challenges. Be prepared with rain gear, appropriate clothing and boots, food, and the company of others. Carry a map, compass, and water. Using caution and good judgment will insure an enjoyable experience. Short hikes can be enjoyable no matter what your physical condition; long hikes may require some special conditioning.

## Are there any special regulations for use of the trail?

Special regulations such as 'No Camping' may be posted by land managers along portions of the trail. In general, the following rules apply: camp at least 100 feet from the trail, water, and scenic areas; treat all drinking water; use a backpack stove for cooking and build a fire only if absolutely necessary; and bury all human waste at least 100 feet from the trail and any water.

## How is the trail marked?

Signing is kept to a minimum to allow you the pleasure of uninterrupted natural surroundings. In confusing areas or for an occasional reminder, the following trail signs are used: a green  on a white rectangle or a white diamond shaped blaze.

## What can I do to aid in the establishment of the Ozark Trail?

As a hiker, it is important that you use the trail and share your knowledge of the trail with other potential users. As a hiking club or user organization, you can assist by taking construction or maintenance responsibility for a portion of the trail. As a property owner, you can share your land with others who seek only to enjoy its scenic and primitive qualities by allowing the Ozark Trail to cross your property. If you would like to offer your assistance in developing the trail or if you have any comments about the trail, contact the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Ozark Trail Coordinator, P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.